DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 131 267 CE 008 592

AUTHOR Simpson, Elizabeth J.
TITLE The Home as a Learning Center for Vocational Development. Occasional Paper No. 16.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. Center for Vocational Education.
PUB DATE Jul 76
NOTE 12p.; Speech presented as one of a series of staff development lectures at the Center for Vocational Education, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Delivery Systems; *Educational Alternatives; Elementary Secondary Education; Family Resources; *Family Role; *Home Instruction; Home Study; *Instructional Technology; Multimedia Instruction; Post Secondary Education; Speeches; *Supplementary Educational Centers; *Vocational Development

ABSTRACT

It is the role of those in the field of vocational education to become involved and help shape educational delivery to the needs and purposes of the learner. There is a need to recognize advances in media of communication, such as television and audio-video cassettes, that make possible a new role for the home as a learning center for vocational development since home study has the advantage of feasibility at all stages in the life cycle, at all social and economic levels, and in all geographic areas. A home-based system of education could provide for widely expanded choices of courses and curricula through a variety of instructional media designed to: (1) Reach young children who are developing concepts of work, leisure, occupational possibilities, (2) provide for training and retraining for occupational competency on the part of students, employed persons, homemakers and others, (3) help the older worker find new career direction, (4) develop competencies needed by both men and women for their roles as homemakers and family members, and (5) promote the personal development and sense of worth of persons of all ages. The home learning center concept deserves attention not only from vocational educators, but also from curriculum developers, educational technology specialists and research personnel, and home economists. (SH)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED131267

Occasional Paper No. 16

THE HOME AS A LEARNING CENTER FOR VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by

Elizabeth J. Simpson, Dean

School of Family Resources and Consumer Sciences

University of Wisconsin-Madison

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The Center for Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

July 1976

OE 008 592

THE CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Vocational Education's mission is to increase the ability of diverse agencies, institutions, and organizations to solve educational problems relating to individual career planning and preparation. The Center fulfills its mission by:

- Generating knowledge through research
- Developing educational programs and products
- Evaluating individual program needs and outcomes
- Installing educational programs and products
- Operating information systems and services
- Conducting leadership development and training programs

PREFACE

The Center for Vocational Education extends its sincere gratitude to Dr. Elizabeth Simpson, Dean, School of Family Resources and Consumer Sciences, University of Wisconsin, for presenting her views on vocational development in The Center's continuing series of Staff Development Lectures.

Dr. Simpson focuses attention on the vast resource potential in the home for development of attitudes and skills critical to an individual's vocational development. Merits of establishing home learning centers and approaches to development of such centers are presented.

Dr. Simpson was formerly Chief of the Curriculum Branch of the Division of Vocational Education Research Center for Adult Vocational, Technical and Manpower Education, Bureau of Occupational Adult Education, Office of Education, H.E.W.

Dr. Simpson received her B.S. degree from Indiana State University, from which she recently received a Distinguished Alumna award, her Master's degree from Iowa State, and her Ed.D. degree from the University of Illinois-Urbana.

Her experiences include teaching, research, administration, and she is known as a curriculum development expert, having developed and implemented several integrated models. Dr. Simpson has served as a consultant over a period of years to several state departments of education and vocational education. She has recently written on "Women and the World of Work," and she has completed a detailed report on curriculum development in vocational-technical education, a paper which was commissioned by the National Research Council.

The Ohio State University and The Center for Vocational Education are honored in sharing with you Dr. Elizabeth Simpson's presentation, "The Home as a Learning Center for Vocational Development."

Robert E. Taylor
Director
The Center for Vocational Education
The Ohio State University

THE HOME AS A LEARNING CENTER

FOR VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Thomas Jefferson once said to John Adams, "I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past." I share Mr. Jefferson's feeling. Dreams of the future-possible dreams of the immediate future—that is what today's presentation is about.

A quiet revolution in educational delivery is underway and it is morally incumbent upon the field of vocational education that its members become involved and help shape it to needs and purposes of vocational students. We cheat our students of opportunities that should be theirs if we fail to take cognizance of the development in media of communication that make possible a new role for the home as learning center for vocational development throughout the life span.

For the preschool child, the home may serve as learning center to develop awareness of a variety of occupational possibilities, to expand vocational self-concepts, and to develop a responsibility ethic. The series of sixteen films entitled, "The Kingdom of Could Be You," which were shown twice in the Captain Kangaroo TV series, were directed toward these goals. This series of films on the Office of Education's sixteen occupational clusters was viewed by three million children in their own homes. I personally know of parents who used the films as take-off on occupational explorations with their children. One of the films was on construction jobs. Generalizations to be developed through viewing this film and through discussion following the viewing include:[1]

Construction involves building things people need and want.

Many people use different tools and materials to help each other build things.

Construction is one example of people helping other people to live better.

People who are construction helpers build many different kinds of things, such as houses, stores, apartment buildings, office buildings.

The entire series of occupational awareness films is now available for sale. Each is accompanied by a study guide. I love the little song which set the theme for the entire series:

There's so much to do
There's so much to be
So much could be you
So much could be me

---

[1]Simpson, Elizabeth and Weisburd, Dan E., "Career Awareness for Young Fry: The Kingdom of Could Be You," *Journal of Research and Development in Education,* Vol. 7, No. 3, Spring, 1974, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga.

There's so much in life that can satisfy
And you'll never know
Unless you try.[2]

For the elementary school-age child, the home as learning center for vocational development may, through appropriate materials and a variety of media, serve to complement and supplement school learnings related to occupational awareness and exploration. For the high school and post-secondary student, in-home learning may complement and supplement in-school activity related to the development of knowledges, skills, and attitudes leading to occupational competence.

For the adult, in-home instruction can serve as an alternative to formal education. With changing job skills, education for change can now keep pace. With lengthening life spans, education in the home can help preserve human dignity. As new images of aging are fast emerging, new concepts of education of the aging for expanded productivity, as well as for self-fulfillment through the years, are developing.

Handicapped persons may find their home learning centers a godsend. I recently spent a few hours in the home of Maria, a physically handicapped dietitian in Milwaukee. Four years ago, she gave up her job in a Milwaukee hospital because of a physical disability. Regaining her strength she has begun to prepare to go back to work. She has a well-organized home learning center where she studies, using textbooks and audio cassettes on recent developments in her field provided by the American Dietetics Association. She says that it requires a lot of self-discipline but she is progressing and at the same time providing a model of a learning person for her teen-age children.

For those who don't want to move around city streets to attend classes at night, home learning centers may provide an answer to learning needs and interest. For slow learners, home learning may serve to supplement school learning. For the gifted and talented, home learning may complement school learning.

A home learning center may serve to unite families through shared family goals. It may provide the setting for parents to contribute to the education of their children—an idea that is gaining a great deal of attention through emerging parenting programs across the country. Of special interest is the December 1974 issue of The Columbia University Teachers College Record on "The Family: First Instructor and Pervasive Guide." A home learning center may provide a setting for the continuing education of parents for work roles—and for family roles. A special purpose may be served when women who have been confined to the home prepare to return to the world of work. The model of learning parents should not be minimized as one purpose served by home learning activity.

A recent exciting publication of the Wisconsin Advisory Council on Vocational Education is on "Alternative Delivery Systems for Providing Occupational Education for Secondary and Post-Secondary Students in Sparsely Populated Areas." The investigation of alternative learning systems, primarily home-based, was conducted by James Bjornerud of the University of Wisconsin-Stout. He found mobile career guidance units in action in Illinois, Utah, and Wisconsin

---

[2]"The Kingdom of Could Be You," (Color), No. 3323, film, Encyclopedia Britannica Corp., Chicago, Ill.

and mobile industrial and office training units in use in New Jersey.[3] Mobile units could be employed in making cassettes, microfiche, records, video discs, and the like, as well as reading materials, available for home use on a loan basis. Bjornerud found that Georgia and Wisconsin have each developed an extensive series of television lessons dealing with occupational awareness, educational opportunities, and the transition from school to work.[4] The Part I Curriculum Development program, with which I was associated in Washington, funded production of ten, as yet unreleased, twenty-seven-minute films on a common core of knowledges in Public Service Occupations for in-home instruction. Development of the films involved translation of curriculum materials developed by Pat Weagraff, now Massachusetts State Director of Vocational Education, from an in-classroom to an in-home mode. The idea is that public service workers, or those aspiring to public service jobs, may upgrade their abilities by viewing the films and studying accompanying print-based materials. Student evaluation sheets are provided in the printed guides. Learners, who may be high school or post-secondary students, or employed persons, answer the questions on the sheets and mail them to a designated post-secondary institution where they are scored; they are then returned to the students. Satisfactory completion of the series yields some tangible reward, such as a certificate of completion.

The Wisconsin Advisory Council's publication on alternative delivery systems for occupational education described the RFD (Rural Family Development) project which aimed at providing undereducated rural adults with the basic skills necessary to secure satisfying employment and to help raise their standard of living. The project employed television lessons, printed home-study content materials which were individualized and personalized, and para-professional home visits to RFD members.[5]

The possibilities in cable TV have barely been tapped. Madison, Wisconsin, like cities across the nation, has several channels virtually empty and crying for action. Interactive television is a reality in a few places—but in the 1980's we may routinely sit down before a screen in our homes and obtain on request a wide variety of services—including courses for vocational development. Beyond dream stage are systems combining television, computer, and telephone for in-home instruction.

Recently, scientists in the U.S. and Europe have developed an electronic hybrid called the videodisc—a relatively inexpensive record that can be played through a TV set to show everything from Hollywood movies to educational and cultural features. By the end of 1976, videodiscs will be marketed in the United States.

General Telephone and Electronics Laboratories report that glass fibers will soon replace thousands of miles of heavy copper cable. They will carry, simultaneously, hundreds of phone conversations, dozens of TV programs, and the high-speed data-talk of computers. The telephone wires that come into homes will tap an immense information network. Possibilities include video phones; video shopping; more TV; banking, library, and security services—THE CLASSROOM AT HOME.

---

[3]Bjornerud, James, "An Investigation of Alternative Delivery Systems for Providing Occupational Education for Secondary and Post-Secondary Students in Sparsely Populated Areas," Wisconsin Advisory Council on Vocational Education, Madison, Wisconsin, p. II-1.

[4]ibid., p. II-2.

[5]ibid., p. II-2.

As a result of the increasing sophistication of our communication technology, indeed, a new role for the home as learning center is developing. But, at its most basic, the learning center may be simply a table and a chair. Most homes can add radio, TV, and some other aids to learning. I've recently added to my home learning center a dandy little calculator at the cost of less than $10.00.

According to John M. King, in an article in the *Washington Post*,

> . . . the average home has functional space and equipment for about every home activity except learning.
>
> "Kids are lucky if they have desks and lamps in a room of their own. The TV is probably the focal point of the family room." What's the answer? "The home learning center," he states. He goes on to say:
>
> The idea is to organize what you need for learning in one or more spaces designed for the purpose. There are three types of centers.
>
> The basic home study unit is built in, say a closet, or free-standing in a bedroom or elsewhere, like a room divider. It includes adequate desk area, and storage space for typewriter, tape or cassette recorder, radio and TV, and perhaps one of the . . . small calculators. Good lighting is essential.
>
> The integrated learning center is the next step up. It is the larger area partially divided from another room as a library carrel with more work area and storage space. Additional equipment might include a stereo system with earphones and a movie and slide projector. Sound absorbing materials should be used for most surfaces.
>
> The family learning center is the third type. It occupies an entire room—spare bedroom, study or converted family room. It can be used by several people at one time by dividing the area into several activity centers.
>
> In addition to previously mentioned equipment, the family learning center can have work areas and equipment for learning-related hobbies, such as photography, model making, or pottery.
>
> The main feature of the room is the home communication center, a multi-media electronic system designed for receiving, storing, and communicating information.

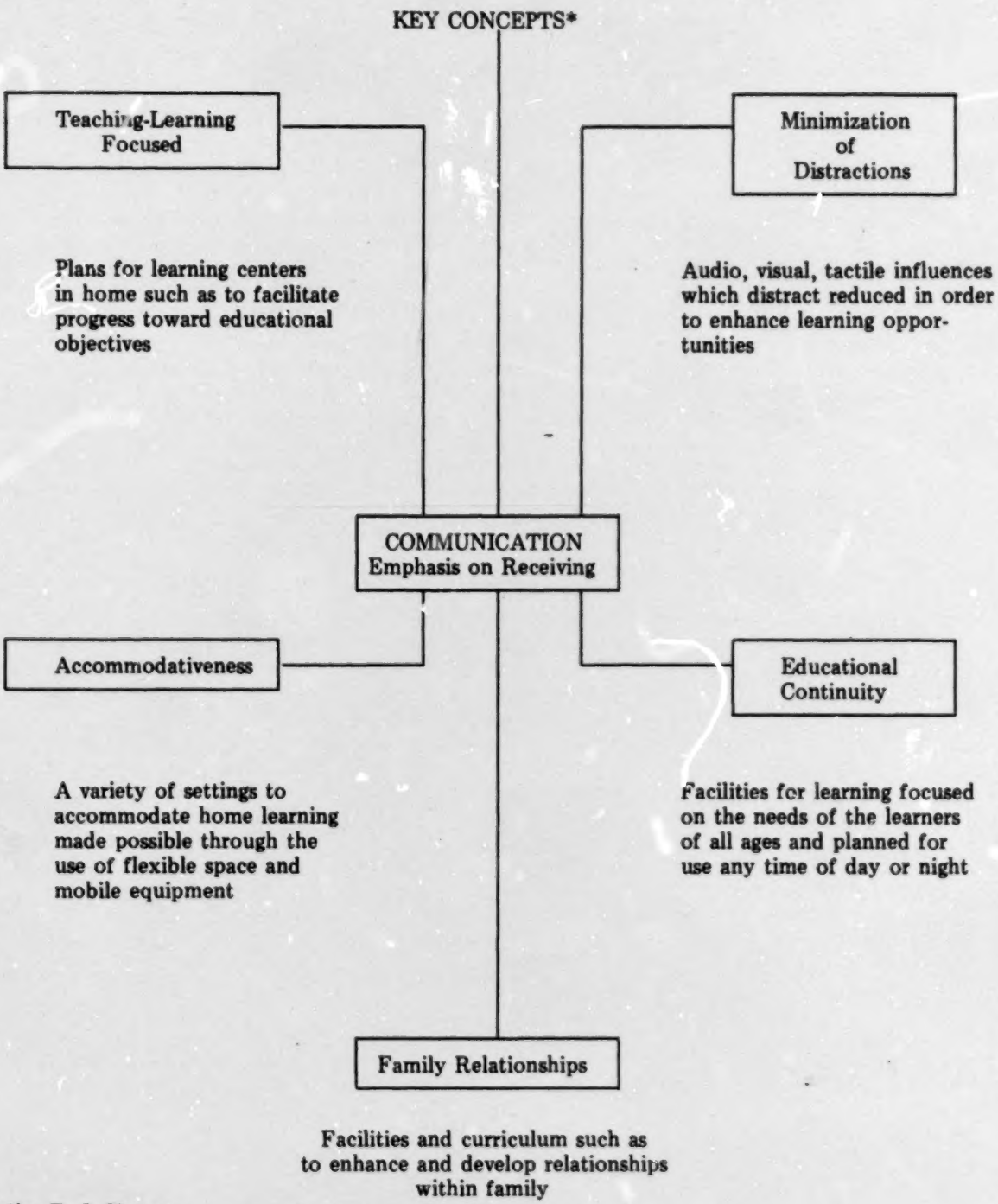
Key concepts involved in the home learning center are shown in the figure on the following page.

Learning centers developed at Houston, Texas for the continuing education of doctors might be adapted for more general use. Grant Taylor, M.D., Division of Continuing Education, The University of Texas Graduate School of Bio-medical Sciences at Houston, designed a "learning resource center for home or office" which combines stereo speakers; storage for journals and books; AM/FM cassette recorder and tape storage; TV monitor; X-ray view box; video-cassette recorder; projector screen; pull-out drawer for 35 mm slide projector; pull-out writing surfaces; lighted tray for viewing and sorting slides and transparencies; storage for films, slides, tapes, books, etc.; and pull-out controls for turntable or stereo system.[6]

---

[6]Smith, Elizabeth A., "A Learning Resource Center for Home or Office," *Texas Medicine*, January 1973, Vol. 69, No. 1, pp. 56-58.

THE HOME AS A LEARNING CENTER


KEY CONCEPTS*
Teaching-Learning Focused
Plans for learning centers in home such as to facilitate progress toward educational objectives
Minimization of Distractions
Audio, visual, tactile influences which distract reduced in order to enhance learning opportunities
COMMUNICATION Emphasis on Receiving
Accommodativeness
A variety of settings to accommodate home learning made possible through the use of flexible space and mobile equipment
Educational Continuity
Facilities for learning focused on the needs of the learners of all ages and planned for use any time of day or night
Family Relationships
Facilities and curriculum such as to enhance and develop relationships within family

*by E. J. Simpson

Inspired by this model, Dr. Gerald Manness of Houston developed his own special learning center, using a whole room in his clinic. This is a center for his continuing education in medicine. He favors films for his own purposes. A tour through Dr. Manness' clinic is of special interest to the educator, for each examining area has its own "learning center" for his patients.

Beyond the possibilities already discussed are:

- Lessons presented in the daily newspaper with student assignments to be mailed to a designated place where students are enrolled for class credit.

  Caleb A. Lewis in a chapter on "Courses by Newspaper" in *Lifelong Learners—A New Clientele for Higher Education*, a publication of the American Association for Higher Education, describes the recent newspaper series on America and the Future of Man, a course developed by University Extension, University of California, San Diego.[7] It was the first in what is planned as a continuing series, Courses by Newspaper—launched by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Papers carrying the series listed names, addresses, and phone numbers of local colleges or universities that give credit for the course of which the lecture is a part. Each institution provides two contact sessions with a teacher-coordinator—one halfway through the series of lectures and after the last lecture has been published. The teacher discusses the subject, answers questions, and gives assignments—to be done at home. He gives an example and assigns grades. Such programs, according to Lewis, will "expand the learning market further by turning on those who were turned off, by reaching those who have not been reached, and by developing better, more exciting, and more accessible instructional programs."[8]

- Correspondence courses using various media.

  Tape cassettes, models, materials for experimentation are typically included in modern correspondence courses for developing occupational competency. Newspaper lessons and correspondence courses have possibilities for vocational development beyond present use. Think how an identified, planned learning center in the home might be employed in relation to courses by newspaper, correspondence, cable TV, and so forth. Information regarding home learning opportunity, such as a new TV series on job skills, might be announced on food cartons going into the home; a similar thing was done in one California town. New mixes of media in instructional programs offer exciting possibilities. The idea of learning contacts with a school could be tied in. A. Nancy Avakian discusses learning contacts as they relate to lifelong educational programming in *Lifelong Learners—A New Clientele for Higher Education.*[9]

Education for vocational development in the home is an idea whose time has come. Curriculum developers should turn their attention to the special adaptations needed in curricula for

---

[7]Lewis, Caleb A., "Courses by Newspaper," *Lifelong Learners—A New Clientele for Higher Education*, Current Issues in Higher Education, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1974, pp. 67-70.

[8]ibid., p. 70.

[9]Avakian, A. Nancy, "Writing a Learning Contract," *Lifelong Learners—A New Clientele for Higher Education*, Current Issues in Higher Education, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1974, pp. 50-56.

a home study mode. Designers of study learning facilities should turn their attention to the development of home learning centers. Educational technology specialists should attend to the developing interest in and need for appropriate low cost hardware for home learning centers. Home economists should make the concept of the home as a learning center a central focus of their program. Educational research personnel should investigate some of the questions related to home study, for example, the possibility of a sense of isolation on the part of students and how to overcome this or the problems of what contents can be delivered appropriately through this mode and what might better be delivered through a formal classroom group situation.

For about five years I've been exploring "learning center in the home" ideas and collecting related materials. These explorations have served to strengthen a belief that home learning possibilities will increase, that someone will exploit these possibilities, and I want it to be us because of what the possibilities can mean in lifelong learning for vocational development and enrichment of home and family life, and because the possibilities may not be realized fully without our involvement.

THE HOME AS A LEARNING CENTER

Basic Concepts:

To a greater or lesser degree, the home has served as a learning center throughout the history of man.

Modern technological advances, such as television and audio-video cassettes, make possible increased learning opportunities in the home.

Because our society is characterized by rapid change and by an increasing complexity and diversity and occupations, leisure, home life, and personal life styles are affected, lifelong learning for all to meet the demands of change, complexity and diversity is a critical need.

A variety of avenues to learning are needed to meet varied needs, interests, life styles, and modes of learning.

Home study has the advantage of feasibility at all stages in the life cycle, at all social and economic levels, and in all geographic areas.

Learning in the home may supplement learning at school or may serve as an alternative.

A home-based system of education could provide for widely expanded choices of courses and curricula through a variety of instructional media.

Home-based educational programs could be designed to reach young children who are developing concepts of work, leisure, occupational possibilities; to provide for training and retraining for occupational competency on the part of students, employed persons, homemakers and others; to help the older worker find new career direction; to develop competencies needed by both men and women for their roles as homemakers and family members; and to promote the personal development and sense of worth of persons of all ages.

The concept of the "home as a learning center" has implications for the quality of family life through family communication regarding learning opportunities and experiences.

Home study on the part of the parent makes possible the role model of the parent as a "learning person."

Providing for a home learning center may affect family housing and home furnishings.

Family and societal values may be affected in terms of greater emphasis on education if the "home as a major center for lifelong learning" is truly realized.

Management with respect to family goals, standards, value, resources, and activities will be affected as the home becomes more of a center for learning activity.

OE 008 592